

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
19 January 1972

AM

9:15 Convene, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20006

ADMINISTRATION

1. Approval of Minutes of November and December Meetings
2. Dates of Next Meetings: February 15 and March 14
3. Report to Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, re
White House Memo
4. Briefing on Highway Development, National Capital Planning
Commission and Department of Transportation

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service
 - a. National Air and Space Museum - Revised Design
 - b. Illumination of Public Buildings
2. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
 - a. Memorial Chapel and Columbarium - Arlington National Cemetery
 - b. Renovations to the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington
National Cemetery
 - (1) New Tomb of Unknown and Construction at Amphitheater
East Front
 - (2) Interior Renovation of Trophy Room
 - (3) Marble and Stone Repairs in Area of Tombs of the
Unknowns
 - (4) TV Seafold
3. National Park Service Department of the Interior
Illumination of Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials
4. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

Old Georgetown Act
 - a. Appendix 1

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b. Demolition of 1220 Wisconsin Ave., NW

c. Request of Citizens Association of Georgetown on
Policy Guidelines for General Development.

Shipstead-Luce Act

a. Appendix 2

b. S.L. 72-801 16th St., N.W. - Illumination of
St. John's Church, Lafayette Square

D.C. Government, Department of General Services

Shaw Branch Library, 6th ,7th and Rhode Island Ave., NW
Revised Design

6. D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency

Railroad Bridge, 7th and Virginia Ave., S.W. - Revised Design
Details, Sverdrup and Parcel, Consulting Engineers

INTERVIEWS

10:30 1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

National Air and Space Museum - Revised Design

10:45 2. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

a. Memorial Chapel and Columbarium - Arlington National
Cemetery - Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Architects

b. Renovations to the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington
National Cemetery:

(1) New Tomb of Unknown and Construction at Amphitheater
East Front

(2) Interior Renovation of Trophy Room

(3) Marble and Stone Repairs in Area of Tombs of the
Unknowns

Mills, Petticord and Mills, Architects

11:30 3. Briefing on Highway Development

Representatives of National Capital Planning Commission and
Department of Transportation (Mr. Oberlander, NCPC and Mr.
Hirten, Dept. of Transportation)

19 January 1972

11:30 4. Apperance of Traffic and Lighting Devices, D.C.

Mr. Airis and Mr. Hartley, D.C. Department of Highways

11:45 5. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

Shaw Branch Library - Revised Design, Eson Cross, Architect

12:00 6. Policy Guidelines for Georgetown

Citizens Association of Georgetown

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
19 January 1972

Meeting convened at 9:15 a.m. at Commission of Fine Arts offices at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Members present:

J. Carter Brown, Chairman
Nicolas Arroyo
Gordon Bunshaft
Jane Dart
Kevin Roche
Edward Stone, Jr.

Staff Present:

Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
William Bogan
Jeffrey Carson
Sibley Jennings
Marylyn Shaw
Lynda Smith

National Capital Planning
Commission Staff Representative
Present:

Edward Hromanik

I. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Minutes for November and December, approved.
- b. Dates for Next Meetings, February 16th and March 14th.
- c. Report to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Secretary told the Commission of a request to advise on possible areas of concern in the Federal Government's involvement with the arts. The Members responded with a decision to submit a report through the Chairman indicating a need for a publication describing the Government's role in the arts. Concern for the state of heraldic and medallion arts and the incorporation of works of art in federal buildings were among a number of specific recommendations discussed. (See Exhibit A.)

d. Briefing on District of Columbia Highway and Transportation Development

The Assistant Secretary told the Commission that a recent study by the Secretary of Transportation had made certain new recommendations about the District of Columbia Highway System and that a presentation on these elements was to be made later in the morning. In conjunction with

this presentation the National Capital Planning Commission was to make a presentation on the basic elements of the approved plan for major thoroughfares in the District of Columbia. The staff stated that they felt this presentation would be informative to the Commission, particularly the new members, since various elements of this highway network would be coming before the Commission for advice in the future.

e. Discussion of District of Columbia Traffic Lights and Street Furniture.

The Secretary stated that later in the morning the District of Columbia Director of Highways, Thomas Airis, was to appear to discuss overhead traffic signals in response to the Commission's invitation. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary indicated that this may be an opportunity to broaden the Commission's interest in those items which affect the appearance of the City such as the color of street lights, street graphics and general housekeeping of the public space in the City.

II. SUBMISSIONS AND REVIEWS

A. General Services Administration

1. National Air and Space Museum - the Mall - Revised Design

The Secretary showed the Commission a series of study models for the Air and Space Museum prepared by architect Gyo Obata since the December meeting. After examining the models the previous evening and again during the meeting, the Members indicated that they preferred the scheme which showed a rhythm of solid and glass elements. These gave a more appropriate sense of scale for this difficult and important site. The Chairman questioned the practicality of the glass roofs and the visibility of large-scale interior exhibits of hardware from the Mall, but Mr. Roche assured the Commission that reflecting glass and roof truss technology would solve these problems. Other schemes showed large sloping glass roofs and large single diamond-plan masses which the Commission found to be out of scale, to yield awkward interior spaces, and to employ architectural mannerisms that were not dictated by the site and would soon date. Further discussion was withheld until the architect's interview later in the morning.

2. Illumination of Public Buildings. The Commission reviewed the previous evening's tour of Public Buildings, agreeing that a great deal had been accomplished and that results of the discussion should be submitted to the General Services Administration and to Park Service in letter form. Discussion during the previous evening between the members and Mr. Walter Meisen of G.S.A. included: Expanding color-corrected illumination as witnessed on the west portico of the Commerce Building, eliminating illumination of all attic stories on the Federal Triangle, relighting the

Archives Building more uniformly to read as terminus of a cross-axis, changing the color of the exposed lamps and lanterns flanking entrances, and generally lowering the level of overall illumination. The Chairman indicated that illumination of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, and St. John's Church were to be covered later in the agenda. (Exhibit B)

B. Department of the Army

1. Memorial Chapel and Columbarium, Arlington National Cemetery - Revised Design. The Assistant Secretary presented a series of drawings and two models to the Commission reflecting the revised designs for this facility. The design was refined and slimmed down structurally, with a gray granite base and white marble cornice and columns. The design followed the previously approved Master Plan for the Cemetery and showed a simple pavilion to the northeast and on axis with the Tomb of the Unknowns. The non-denominational Chapel was shown over a ground floor with provision for 52,000 urns. The Assistant Secretary also pointed out that there was an addition to the Master Plan of two parking lots flanking the Chapel which the Architect and the National Capital Planning Commission advised against. A large oval pool originally designed to go in front of the Chapel had been eliminated for budgetary reasons. The Commission found the design excellent, but questioned the parking lots and the elimination of the pool. Further action was not taken until a conference with the Architect and Army later in the morning.

2. Renovations to the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National Cemetery.

a. New Tomb of Unknown and Construction at Amphitheater East Front. The Assistant Secretary presented a series of drawings showing expansion of the Terraces and Stairs facing the Tomb of the Unknowns. The new construction proposed expansion of underground facilities and terrace viewing areas in the existing architectural style. A series of photographs of the original design and as-built conditions were passed between the members. The proposal also included provision for an additional undesignated tomb adjacent to the existing three tombs. The Commission felt that the design of the area and the building in particular were enhanced by the increased terrace construction, but withheld further comment until an interview with the Architect and the Army later in the morning.

b. Interior Renovation of Trophy Room. The Assistant Secretary presented drawings and material samples for a redecorating of the Trophy Room, located between the Amphitheater and the Tomb of the Unknowns. The project was for the upgrading of this space to provide shelter for visiting public and dignitaries during wreath-laying ceremonies as well as to provide display space for memorial objects. The Architect's recommendations included white vinyl wallpaper, red carpets, bronze chain mail

draperies with blue and white velvet swags, and blue vinyl wallpaper in the stairs to the mezzanine. The Secretary pointed out a question of taste in displaying military uniforms and weapons on the upper level, in a Memorial context. The members stated their objection to the proposals and agreed to recommend obtaining a professional interior designer, familiar with neoclassic interiors, later in the morning.

c. Marble and Stone Repairs in Area of Tomb of the Unknowns.

The Assistant Secretary showed the Commission drawings and told them of plans to repair stone on the Tombs and on the stairways and retaining walls. This was to be done in a competent professional manner matching existing materials. The Commission had no objection to this proposed work, but withheld further discussion until a meeting later in the morning with the Architect and the Army.

d. The Assistant Secretary told the Commission that on an inspection trip to the site on January 17th he and the Secretary had observed a "Temporary" plywood television camera stand built on the steps in front of the Tomb of the Unknowns. This stand or platform had been in place for a number of years and was quite an eyesore which the Commission had objected to on previous occasions. The Chairman recommended that the Commission make their continued objections to this construction known in conjunction with advising the Army on the three above proposals.

C. National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Illumination of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials.

The Chairman introduced the subject and referred to the previous evening's inspection of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials. The Commission responded favorably to the news by local parks director, Russell Dickenson, that light poles would be installed at the Jefferson Memorial which would sink into the ground when not in use. The Commission specifically objected to, and felt it was undesirable to have, the eight foot high terrace level poles it had examined the previous evening. It was agreed that such an action would be transmitted to the Park Service. As part of its action, the Commission would suggest additional fixtures for the Lincoln Memorial to give a uniform low level of illumination to the attic. Reference to the Park Service proposal to illuminate the individual flags around the base of the Washington Monument would include the suggestion that such illumination be of very low intensity. (Exhibit C)

D. District of Columbia Government, Department of Economic Development

1. Old Georgetown Act.

a. Appendix 1, approved.

b. Demolition of 1220 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. The Secretary showed the Commission photographs of this 18th Century Building covered in Historic American Buildings Survey format by the Commission's publication on Wisconsin Avenue, Georgetown. He stated that the building had

been allowed to deteriorate and had now been condemned as unsound and unsanitary, and that the Commission was specifically excluded by law from advising the District of Columbia Government in such a matter. This flaw to the Old Georgetown Act, as well as preservation laws in other cities, was a significant loop-hole for any owner desiring to demolish a historic building by neglect. The Secretary showed the Commission drawings of a one-floor "Burger Chef" hamburger restaurant proposed by the owner to replace the 18th Century federal brick structure. He told the Commission that the representatives of the Georgetown Citizens Association would make a statement on the problem later in the morning and that the owner had been invited to be present. The Chairman regretted the restricted authority of the Commission in such a case and recommended that the Commission suggest to the Mayor that in the future such cases be submitted to the Commission for advice.

c. Request of Citizens Association of Georgetown on Policy Guidelines for General Development. The Secretary stated that representatives of the Citizens Association would make a statement later in the morning and that he had invited the three members of the Old Georgetown Board to sit in on the presentation and to meet the Commission Members.

2. Shipstead-Luce Act

a. Appendix 2, Approved. Exhibit C₁.

b. S.L. 72-801 16th Street, N.W. - Illumination of St. John's Church, Lafayette Square. The Secretary showed the Commission drawings and photographs describing an inexpensive scheme to illuminate the Church. He stated that the Church Board was interested in knowing if the Commission recommended waiting for the General Services Administration to illuminate the Church. The Commission agreed to respond to the specific proposal, feeling that soft illumination, primarily of the tower, was desirable at this time. The Secretary told the Commission that Mr. Vanderpool would be present later in the day as part of the Old Georgetown Board, and also represented the Church. The Chairman stated the hope that such illumination would be incandescent. Further action was withheld until a discussion with Mr. Vanderpool later in the morning.

E. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

Shaw Branch Library, 6th, 7th and Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. - Revised Design.

The Assistant Secretary presented drawings and a study model of the revised design as well as photographs of the previous two designs for this City library. The revised design showed a precast concrete facade over a pair of interlocking triangular forms. The Commission generally felt that the design showed only a small improvement over the previous disapproved design. Mr. Stone specifically stated that the plan of the landscaping needed total restudy. Mr. Bunshaft stated that the plan and elevations were reasonable for the difficult site, and Mr. Roche felt that in all probability a fourth try would not yield a significantly improved design. The Commission felt that the project could be approved with the proviso that new facade and

landscaping studies be submitted, and that it would not be necessary to interview the architect at this phase of study. The scheduled interview was cancelled. (Exhibit D)

F. District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency
Railroad Bridge, 7th and Virginia Avenue, S.W. - Revised Design,
Sverdrup and Parcel, Consulting Engineers.

The Secretary showed drawings to the Commission indicating a refinement of abutment details, as suggested by the Commission at the December Meeting. The details were approved. (Exhibit E)

III. INTERVIEWS

10:30 A. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service,
National Air and Space Museum - Revised Design.

The project was represented by the Architect, Gyo Obata, and museum director, Michael Collins. The Commission directed its comments to the Architect and the Chairman referred to the quantity of work done since the December meeting and expressed the Commission's appreciation for this effort. The Chairman indicated which of the schemes was favored for further development, referring to one of the study models showing four solid pavillions connected by glass elements. He praised the asymmetrical north-south section, and the dignity that it would bring to that site. Mr. Bunshaft indicated that it showed the embryo of a great piece of architecture and hoped that Mr. Obata would be able to develop the scheme with some improvement of the joining of the vertical elements and the ground plane. Mr. Obata agreed to develop the scheme and representatives of G.S.A. were informed that the parti was definitely approved and that the Commission would look forward to reviewing further developments in February. Exhibit E₁.

10:45 B. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

1. Memorial Chapel and Columbarium, Arlington Cemetery, Keyes,
Lethbridge and Condon, Architects. The Architect, Mr. F. D. Lethbridge and Mr. Donald Lynn, of the Army Corps of Engineers represented the project. The Chairman stated the Commission's approval of the designs for the Chapel, stating the Commission would hope to see the parking adjacent to the Chapel eliminated and the eventual inclusion of the reflecting pool between the Field of Heroes and the Chapel. Mr. Lethbridge agreed with the Commission that if parking were provided in the vicinity of the Chapel, even though this was specifically advised against, it would be adequately screened with both trees and low shrubs to provide concealment from the Tomb of the Unknowns. (Exhibit F)

2. Renovations to the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National
Cemetery, Mills, Petticord & Mills, Architects. Mr. Loren Sage represented the Architects and Mr. Lynn represented the Army. The Chairman expressed the Commission's approval of the scheme to add to the Tomb of the Unknowns

and the Trophy Room terrace, stating that the proposal enhanced the site. (Exhibit G)

3. Interior Renovation of Trophy Room, Arlington National Cemetery, Mills, Petticord & Mills, Architects. Mr. Loren Sage represented the Architects and Mr. Lynn represented the Army. The Chairman stated the Commission's disapproval of the scheme for interior decoration of the Trophy Room and suggested that the Army obtain an interior design consultant more familiar with the period and style of the room involved. Mr. Bunshaft raised the question of the propriety of exhibiting mannequins in military uniforms in the Mezzanine of the Trophy Room. The advice of the Commission was noted by the project representatives. (Exhibit H)

4. Marble and Stone Repairs in Area of Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National Cemetery, Mills, Petticord and Mills, Architects. Mr. Loren Sage represented the Architects and Mr. Lynn represented the Army. Mr. Sage briefly mentioned the scope of the repairs intended and the Chairman indicated the Commission's approval. (Exhibit I)

11:30 C. Briefing on Highway Development

1. National Capital Planning Commission Approved Major Thoroughfare Plan, presented by Mr. George Oberlander, Director of Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Oberlander described with maps the location and extent of proposed additional highways and parkways for the District of Columbia for the information of the Commission of Fine Arts.

2. Department of Transportation, Report on District of Columbia Highways System, presented by Mr. John Hirten, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of Transportation. Mr. Hirten described the involvement of the Department of Transportation in advising Congress on the progress of the D.C. Transportation System and went on to describe features of his Department's study. They recommended such features as the New York Avenue Industrial Highway and keeping K Street, N.W. as a surface route rather than tunneling it. DOT also recommended elimination of two cross-town highways and close alignment with the METRO. Mr. Hirten's presentation was for the information of the Commission of Fine Arts. The Chairman thanked him and expressed hopes of keeping in close touch with the Department of Transportation.

12:00 D. Appearance of Traffic and Lighting Devices, D.C. Streets

Mr. Airis, Director of the D.C. Department of Highways, and Mr. Hartley, Assistant Director represented the District of Columbia Government. The Chairman stated that the Commission had seen newspaper articles about the Department's desire to try overhead traffic lights at five "high-accident" locations. He stated that the Commission of Fine Arts was far in favor of all possible highway safety efforts, but was extremely interested in the design and location of all new devices. Messrs. Airis and Hartley expressed their feelings that statistics indicated a need for following the National

Safety Code standards for overhead traffic lights as a technique in reducing traffic fatalities. Mr. Hartley showed the members several designs used elsewhere for this type of device and the members responded by saying that none would be applicable to the District of Columbia. They approved of the concept of arranging the signals horizontally. Messrs. Bunshaft and Arroyo suggested that a single L-shaped pole be industrially designed by engineers and/or architects to be a very simple engineering solution to the problem, which would be unique to Washington. The Chairman and other members agreed that such a device should receive the best possible industrial design talent. Mr. Stone stated that he hoped this design could be a part of an overall effort at improving the design, effectiveness and aesthetics of all street graphics. Messrs. Airis and Hartley agreed to look into the matter and possibly apply for a grant to hire the best qualified design consultants. (Exhibit J)

12:30 E. Policy Guidelines for Georgetown

The Georgetown Citizens Association was represented by Captain Peter Belin, President; Mr. Terry Miller, Vice President; Col. Robert Evans, Preservation Chairman; and Robert Lyle, Historian. The first of these spoke, stressing the intent of the Old Georgetown Act to preserve the character and scale of the oldest buildings in Georgetown. They stated that certain large scale developments approved by the Commission of Fine Arts were of questionable propriety as a setting for the oldest buildings and that they hoped the Commission would reorient its criteria to conform more closely with the Association's design philosophy, i.e., more conservative and smaller scale. They also stated that they felt no substantial projects should be approved by the Commission until the present contract with consultants to study the Waterfront would be completed (about one year). The Citizen's Association also suggested that the Commission of Fine Arts find a way to involve itself more with condemned buildings, such as 1220 Wisconsin Avenue. Col. Evans stated that he also represented the Committee of 100 for the National Capital, which was in complete harmony on the above points. The Chairman thanked the Citizen's Association representatives for their statements and introduced the Georgetown Board: Wynant Vanderpool, Thomas Stohlman and Warren Cox to the Members of the Commission of Fine Arts. The Commission and the Board had been given this presentation jointly for their information.

12:50 F. Lighting for St. John's Church, Lafayette Square at 16th Street. The Chairman asked Mr. Vanderpool to discuss lighting for St. John's Church. The Commission members indicated that they were in favor of soft incandescent light for the Church and hoped that the tower would be the most prominent part of the illumination scheme. Mr. Vanderpool stated that there was a very limited amount of money available for the project, but that they would attempt to proceed according to the Commission's wishes. The Chairman thanked Mr. Vanderpool and adjourned the meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Charles H. Atherton

Charles H. Atherton,
Secretary

EXHIBIT B, MINUTES FOR MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS, 18 January 1972

Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, 18 January 1972.

Members Present:

J. Carter Brown, Chairman
Jane Dart
Gordon Bunshaft
Nicolas Arroyo
Kevin Roche

Staff present:

Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
Sibley Jennings

National Park Service present:

Russell Dickenson
Jack Fish
Peter Gill

General Services Administration
present:

Walter Meissen

National Gallery of Art,
Consultant, present:

Claude Engle

The meeting convened at 6:45 pm at the Commission Offices at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

After a few brief minutes of general conversation, during which the members examined the alternate study models for the next day's discussion on the Air and Space Museum for the Mall, the Commission and its party embarked into five automobiles and began a tour and discussion of Washington's night illumination.

A. The Federal Triangle

1. The motorcade passed the White House going east and turned south on 15th Street, N.W., where they slowed to examine color corrected lights on the west porticos of the Commerce Department. The motorcade then went east on Constitution Avenue and disembarked in the drive of the Museum of History and Technology.

2. From the Museum of History and Technology the Commission and Party looked at the Federal Triangle, noting the impropriety of the illumination on the attic story of the buildings. Mr. Meissen of G.S.A. pointed out the Justice Department at 8th and Constitution Avenue which had the

lights on its attic story turned off as an experiment#. The Commission suggested that all illumination on the attic stories of the Federal Triangle Buildings be eliminated.

3. The Commission then proceeded up 14th St., N.W., through the Federal Triangle and stopped near the District Building and observed that there are inscriptions on parts of the attic visible from this place. After discussion the Commission requested that these attics not be illuminated for the sake of uniformity. Pediments should be softly illuminated.

4. The motorcade then proceeded southeast on Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., to the drive of the National Gallery of Art, where they paused and examined the Federal Triangle, particularly the non-illuminated attic of the Justice Department and the street lighting on Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues.

5. The party then proceeded south on 4th Street and west on Madison Drive to the corner of 7th Street where they disembarked and looked at the Archives building. Here the Commission reiterated their feelings to Mr. Meissen about diminishing and color-correcting all illumination, eliminating the attic lights and treating the Archives as an axial structure with uniform lighting for its entire height, with the exception of the attic. This would mean lighting the exterior of the colonnade and balancing lighting levels above and below the main cornice. Mr. Meissen assured the members of the Commission that these items would be seriously looked into.

6. Mr. Bunshaft was asked about the lighting for the Hirshhorn Gallery, which he designed. Mr. Bunshaft replied that the only illumination on the completed building would be down-lighting from quartz lamps from the coffers to the open ground floor.

7. The Commission proceeded south on 7th Street to Independence and west on Independence Avenue to L'Enfant Plaza where they drove the length of the Tenth Street Mall and around the Overlook Park. The Commission noted the special street lighting fixtures of this urban renewal complex.

8. After proceeding south on 14th Street, the Commission alighted at the Jefferson Memorial where they examined an eight foot high pole mock-up for the terrace level and were told that the Park Service had obtained funds to install retractable poles for overall illumination of the Memorial. The Chairman stated that he was delighted and that the Commission would back the use of such a scheme. It was uncertain at that time whether there would be four or six poles. Scaffolding was in place for installation of soffit and ceiling lights at the Memorial and there was nothing to see in the way of the new or proposed lighting in place. The Commission expressed favor with the White House lighting as visible from the Jefferson Memorial, but did not like the lighting of the Lincoln Memorial. The Park Service officials stated that the attic lighting, which the Commission had specifically complained about, had been dimmed as far as possible without

spottiness. The Commission stated that they hoped the lighting could be dimmed much further, even if it meant adding more fixtures to eliminate spottiness.

9. The Commission then proceeded through Potomac Park to the Lincoln Memorial, where they alighted while the lights were further dimmed by the Park Service. At this point the Commission reiterated its position on seeing further study on the addition of more attic lights for the Lincoln Memorial to provide a dimmer level of illumination without discoloration and spottiness. The Park Service agreed to pursue the matter in the new fiscal year. In the interior the Commission suggested that the lower light level, even with some spottiness, was the lesser of two evils.

10. The Meeting adjourned at 8:55 with the party splitting up from the Lincoln Memorial, rather than returning to the Commission's offices.

March 20, 1972

Honorable Nancy Hanks
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts
806 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20560

Dear Miss Hanks:

I am happy to send you the outline of the Commission of Fine Arts reply to the President's memorandum regarding the role of the Federal Government and the Arts.

The Commission of Fine Arts was established in 1910 by an Act of Congress "to advise generally upon matters of art". This it has done, to a great degree on the appearance of the city of Washington, and to a lesser degree in areas outside the Capital. However, this latter aspect is not inconsequential, and has involved the design of our National Cemeteries abroad, gifts to other nations such as statues, and many designs for our National Park System. It is not, therefore, a "local" agency of government. While the appearance of the city of Washington as the nation's capital is the Commission's primary objective, it should be obvious that the Commission could operate on a much broader scale.

As to specific recommendations regarding other agencies of Government and their role in promoting the visual arts, we would like to take note of the following:

The Federal Building Program

The federal building program provides an excellent opportunity to combine architecture with sculpture and painting, and the latter two are at this time devoid. Murals and bas reliefs on the interiors, fountains, sculpture and possibly mosaics could give a great enrichment to any civic design, and it is a course that should be pursued.

Medals

The artistic quality of designs for our National Medals authorized by Congress have steadily deteriorated. There ought to be a fresh look at how the designs are achieved and to the possibility of commissioning individual artists for the execution of medals. This does not necessarily mean competition per se. That is a separate question and one that has many encumbrances.

The Postal Service

The Postal Service occupies an enormous amount of space which under the present administrative policy is not particularly scrutinized in terms of architectural design. A great amount is leased space where the control of the building is "after the fact". At the same time the Postal Service facilities have probably more personal contact with the American citizen than any other branch of Government. Certainly these buildings and their embellishment should be a matter of public concern. This should afford an excellent opportunity on many levels for the inclusion of works of art.

Historic Preservation

The American people are much more aware of historic preservation than they were a decade ago. The Federal Government can in many ways implement programs toward this end. In Washington, for example, a corporate structure or independent Federal agency could easily be set up to administer and possibly acquire buildings of historic significance. There is at this time no governmentally funded vehicle for such action.

The Bicentennial

The Bicentennial is a wonderful opportunity to engage artists at all levels: for the graphic design of stamps, emblems and a variety of other materials for the design of Bicentennial parks and spaces, sculpture and other artistic embellishments that belong there and give it meaning, and to the architecture of the new pavilions that are associated.

Urban Renewal

Urban Renewal in general, when federal funds are involved, should provide an opportunity for the inclusion of all kinds of works of art. There should be sculpture, fountains, and outdoor places in which people can play or relax. Nothing could be more apt for the city of Washington.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

February 11, 1972

Dear Arthur:

The Commission of Fine Arts was glad to have the opportunity to inspect the lighting of the Federal Triangle on January 18th, and especially to be joined by Walter Meisen whose comments were very helpful.

Our first recommendation was a simple one - turn off the lights on the attic stories of all the buildings in the Federal Triangle. I am delighted to see that this has already been done in many cases. Buildings across the ellipse should also be included in this approach. It is a great improvement and a major step toward a final solution and a first-rate design.

Secondly, we look forward to the relamping of all fixtures with bulbs of a warmer color tone. The color of those put experimentally in the porticos of the west facade of the Commerce building promises to be an improvement. A color matching in spectrum the incandescent lighting of the White House and the Washington Monument is the ideal, and any future developments of technology toward that goal should be taken advantage of.

The color of the exposed bulbs near the entrances of buildings is especially critical. As they are often seen in juxtaposition with the incandescent bulbs inside the buildings, our hope is that these glarey bulbs can be changed soon.

The Commission feels that the overall level of illumination in the Triangle is too high. It would be interested in seeing what adjustments could be made on an experimental basis and viewed at a future meeting. If slightly less powerful

...2/

bulbs are not available, covering the lamps with a frosted glass or other screening might produce the necessary effect.

The highly successful illumination of public buildings in Paris and elsewhere has vindicated the concept of taking care not to over-illuminate large buildings.

The Archives Building represents a special set of circumstances because of its cross-axis relationship with the Mall. Here the Commission feels that in addition to eliminating the lighting on the top or attic story, the overall illumination should be more uniform. This will require lighting the outside of the portico, and balancing its illumination with the flanking walls and the large vertical plane above the pediment.

Again we appreciate working directly with you on projects such as these, that affect the appearance of the Federal City so fundamentally. We look forward to hearing from you about actions taken on the above, and plans for the illumination of other buildings in the city.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,

J. Carter Brown
Director

Mr. Arthur F. Sampson
Commissioner, Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20405

enclosure

February 9, 1972

Dear Mr. Kreger:

I attach a carbon of our official letter to Arthur Sampson on the subject of lighting in Washington.

The Fine Arts Commission held a special nighttime meeting, with our members coming in from California, Florida and New York, to go over the lighting question with Wally Meisen of your staff and officials of the National Park Service. We are also in touch with the District Highways and the Smithsonian. The Commission of Fine Arts, as a Presidentially-appointed body to advise the President and Congress, seems to be the only body around in a position to help coordinate the various efforts of independent agencies, and I wanted you to know how delighted we have been by the spirit of cooperation shown by the people in GSA. Messrs. Sampson and Meisen had a productive lunch together with Charles Atherton, Secretary of the Fine Arts Commission, in my dining room here at the National Gallery, and we all look forward to the various ways in which GSA can and does contribute to the public happiness through design excellence.

I look forward to meeting you, and send you every best wish.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Rod Kreger
Acting Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20405

JCB:ag

Exhibit B.

February 11, 1972

Dear Russell:

The Commission of Fine Arts was glad to have the opportunity to inspect the night illumination on Washington's memorials with you, Jack Fish and Peter Gill on January 13. I think we all found it very useful and informative.

We were particularly pleased to learn that it will now be possible to install retractable poles for the principal lighting of the Jefferson Memorial. This is a real achievement and will add greatly to the overall effect, especially to the dignity of the setting.

The Commission questions, however, the desirability of locating six additional eight foot poles on the secondary base surrounding the colonnade. It would seem that these lighting fixtures could be moved closer to the outer edge and be lowered to two or three feet in height and achieve the same effect.

The softer lighting on the attic of the Lincoln Memorial is far better even though there may be some resulting spottiness. As a short term solution, however, this certainly is the lesser of two evils. Eventually we hope that additional fixtures will be installed and this would eliminate the spottiness.

While it probably came as a surprise, no one on the Commission was disturbed by the shadows on the Washington Monument that are the result of keeping the flags flying during the night. The general feeling seemed to be that it gave the

...2/

monument a certain vitality and interest, and did not detract from its dignity. What does pose a problem is the direct illumination of the flags, which we understand is required by law when they are flown at night. Since there is apparently no way around this requirement, the lights should be as soft as possible and located in such a manner that the poles themselves will not catch the light.

Again, we appreciate working directly with you on projects such as these. I think you will agree a lot can be accomplished in a relatively short time. We look forward to the developments of the lighting of Jefferson Memorial.

With all best,

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Russell Dickenson
General Superintendent
National Park Service
National Capital Parks
1100 Ohio Drive, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20024

CA:sjc

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON OLD GEORGETOWN ACT APPLICATIONS

1/19/72

NO	ADDRESS AND OWNER	PROJECT
OG 72-		
72	1519 34th St., N.W. Daniel L. Rumsey	Alter front, change garage door, add bay window and change roof to mansard w/dormers. Add canopy.
ACTION:	Do not issue permit. Recm restudy of the proposition of new garage door in relation to openings above, and roof treatment in relation to existing shape and shapes of adjacent buildings. Bay window not recommended.	
73	1226 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Marriott Corp.	6" gold letters on black background.
ACTION:	Issue permit.	
74	3127 P St., N.W. Constance O. Allen	Installation of bracket light at front door and one bracket light at rear door.
ACTION:	Issue permit. Suggest use of incandescent lights only.	
75	1728 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Tape-Tronics, Inc.	Prefabricate, paint and erect flat against building one sign as described in dwgs and photos.
ACTION:	Issue permit. Suggest sign be located only over show window or above alarm box to edges of combined window-door opening.	
76	2001 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. John Faracclas	One d/f or 3 f. display internally lighted, size and actual layout to be determined by personal appearance before CFA.
ACTION:	Do not issue permit. Scheme "A" recommended in bronze color, submit proposed size and height.	
77	2811 M St., N.W. Irene Yockelson	Install canvas awning over window and door.
ACTION:	Do not issue permit. Request exact information on location of awning in relation to ornamental molding and width of bldg.	
79	1220 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Sidney Zlotnik	Raze
ACTION:	do not issue permit. Request permit be held until the OG Board of Arch. Review has an opportunity to examine this structure. Because of its age, historic qualities and importance to the streetscape, the CFA requests that an inspection of the building, both interior and exterior be arranged at the owners earliest convenience.	

PROJECTNO ADDRESS AND OWNER

Sign above store window w/lights.

ACTION: Returned for exact drawing. 1/12/72

Install canvas awning over window and door.

To make new opening in old brick wall at first floor level for new pair wood glazed doors. New opening head and jamb, new doors to match old work.

ACTION: Issue permit. Design recommended. 2/14/72.

81 1200 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
National Bank of Washington
ACTION: Do not issue permit. Character of letters not recommended. Suggest free standing letters similar to existing. Drawings and photos submitted are not up to date. 1/14/72.

Entrance canopy. Galvanized pipe frame, vinyl coated canvas cover.

ACTION: Do not issue permit. Request material sample. No objection to design; extending awning over public sidewalk not recommended. 2/14/72.

85 1220 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
Sidney Zlotnick
Raze exist. condemned 4 story structure. Construct new one story restaurant structure. New building. Masonry, set back from sidewalk w/10 ft. entrance and planting area.

ACTION: Returned at the request of the Bureau of Licenses and Inspections per telephone conversation 1/14/72.

86 2915 M St., N.W.
James Gore

Install sign flush on building to publicize restaurant at rear end of alley.

ACTION: Do not issue permit. Request drawing showing exact size and relationship of sign to pilaster. 1/14/72.

87 3144 Dumbarton Ave., N.W.
Dann J. Hopkins

Sign 8 3/4"x8"

ACTION: Do not issue. Suggest centering sign over show window, straightening "O's" and simplifying "R". XX/5/72
1/14/72.

NO	ADDRESS AND OWNER	PROJECT
88	2001 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. John Faracelas	Furnish and install one d/f stencil cut face imitation duranodic finish 48"x96" display 10'-0" above grade free standing copy area 6 1/2 ft. x 2 faces total copy area 13 ft.
ACTION: Do not issue. No objection to materials or design. Sign should be limited to square feet overall. Sign is also too high. 1/14/72		
89	1035 31st St., N.W. Yes, Inc.	Remove and replace existing foundation, add staircase in rear of bldg., add ramp in front of building.
ACTION: No not issue. Request details of retaining wall end at public walk. Overall scheme recommended geometrically. Suggest elimination of twin double hung windows over entrance and harmonization of all sash and doors. 1/14/72		
90	3604 Prospect St., N.W. Sam Bialek	Addition of bedroom, living room and entertainment room, plus various interior renovations.
ACTION: Do not issue. Recommend restudy and simplification. Scale of this scheme is better than previous design. 1/14/72		

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT SUBMISSIONS

1/19/72

NO ADDRESS AND OWNER

PROJECT

SL 72-

26 300 1st St., S.E.
Capitol Hill Assoc.

Capitol Hill Assoc. Exterior entrance canopy made of galvanized steel pipe frame with vinyl coated canvas cover.

ACTION: Do not issue. No objection to design of awning if not extended over public sidewalk. 1/14/72

27 2522 Virginia Ave., N.W.
Watergate Improvements Assoc.

Erect illuminated double faced sign. For Saks store ground floor commercial area.

ACTION: Do not issue permit. Free standing sign not recommended. Suggest commercial signs for this complex be kept up and under balcony toward show window. 1/14/72

28 600 N. Hampshire Ave., N.W.
Watergate Improvements Inc.

Erect illuminated double faced sign.

ACTION: Do not issue. Not approved for red letters as shown on drawings. Suggest all directional signs conform to uniform system with white plastic or bronze metal backgrounds. Letters should be only black, bronze or white. Recommend soft white illumination. 1/14/72

29 2500 Virginia Ave., N.W.
Watergate Improvements Assoc.

Erect illuminated d/f sign.

ACTION: Do not issue. Not approved for red letters as shown on dwgs. Suggest all directional signs conform to uniform system with white plastic or bronze metal backgrounds. Letters should be only black, bronze or white. Recommend soft white illumination. 1/14/72.

EXHIBIT D

2 February 1972

Dear Colonel Starobin:

The Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting on the 19th of January gave its preliminary approval to the massing and general concept of the designs for the Shaw Branch Library at 6th and Rhode Island Avenue, N.W. We would like to see more study of the elevations and suggesting emphasizing a feeling of horizontality. This could very well lend itself to the third story addition which is contemplated for the future. We also recommend that the site plan be greatly simplified. The many small planters of irregular shape look a bit chopped up and chaotic.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Lt. Colonel Sam D. Starobin
Acting Director
Department of General Services
Room 501
601 Indiana Ave., N.W.
Wash., D.C. 20004

Exhibit D.

EXHIBIT E

2 February 1972

Dear Mr. Mister:

This is merely to confirm the Commission's approval of the remaining details of the Railroad Bridge design for the 7th Street Southwest which the Commission reviewed at its January 19th meeting. We appreciate the way our suggestions were followed and the effort which the architects put into their studies.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Melvin A. Mister
Director
D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency
Washington, D.C.

Exhibit E.

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February 7, 1972

Dear Mr. Sampson:

We are happy to report that at the Commission meeting on January 19 a new preliminary design concept was approved for the National Air and Space Museum. For purpose of identification (there were a number of alternative schemes), it was comprised of a series of four enclosed pavilions connected by three spaces with glazed floor and walls.

discussed We believe it fits well in its setting on the Mall; its interior spaces have great potential; and it is capable, with careful study, of becoming a distinguished piece of architecture. We appreciate the time and effort the architect is giving to this demanding project.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Arthur F. Sampson
Commissioner
Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
18th and F Streets, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

JCB:CA:sjt

EXHIBIT F

2 February 1972

Dear Mr. Resta:

We are happy to report the Commission's approval at its January 19th meeting of the revised designs for the chapel and columbarium at Arlington National Cemetery. We feel the design of the building is in every way appropriate and fitting for its setting and purpose. It has great dignity. We only hope that this feeling can be carried out in the development of the site and that the parking lots adjoining the chapel will indeed be temporary and that the reflecting pool, which we understand has been eliminated from the current program, will be restored. A pool of this sort would add a very special quality to the setting.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. R. H. Resta
Chief, Engineering Division
Department of the Army
Baltimore District, Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 1715
Baltimore, Md. 21203

Exhibit F.

11 February 1972

Dear Mr. Resta:

I am writing on the renovations to the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery that were reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting on January 19th.

We were happy to see the expanded terrace at the entrance to the trophy room and amphitheater. Not only will it provide much needed space for viewing the changing of the guard ceremony but in the Commission's opinion will enhance the appearance of the building. As you may know it was always conceived with a broad horizontal terrace, as the foreground and never the cascade of steps that has in fact evolved. Thus the larger terrace is very much in keeping with the original concept. The additional tomb is also approved as well as the repairs that are projected for the retaining wall.

We would hope to see further study of the trophy room, as a certain dignity is lacking in the proposed materials. While the room could stand some additional color, we feel that the current proposal is not the answer, and recommend that an interior designer who has a good understanding of the fundamental character of the room be consulted. In any event we emphasize the word restraint above all others.

We question the appropriateness of displaying military uniforms on mannequins in the mezzanine areas of the trophy room. It would seem reasonable, however, to display medals and other devices of a heraldic nature.

I would also like to take this opportunity to restate the Commission's objections to the "temporary" television platforms adjoining the stairway just to the east of the tomb. It greatly detracts from the dignity of the surroundings. I do not know how much this is used, but if there is a continuing need why could it not be part of the whole program for the enhancement of the area and planned as a permanent installation. It would be very simple to construct something that would retract below grade or behind the wall so that it would not be a part of the general scene. As it stands now it is unsatisfactory.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. R. H. Resta
Baltimore District
Corps of Engineers
Baltimore, Md. 21203

Exhibit H & I.

2 February 1972

Dear Captain Belin:

We were happy to have you and your associates join us at our meeting on the 19th and to hear the Associations views on the development of Georgetown and some of our mutual problems.

Regarding the issuance of a demolition permit when a building has been condemned, we are asking the city government to at least informally advise us of pending proceedings where an old building is involved. We feel that the posting of such proceedings on the property is not adequate warning and that the least that could be done is to notify the Commission so that the public could be made aware of pending action.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Captain Peter Belin
1623 28th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Exhibit K.

February 11, 1972

Dear Gil:

The proposed demolition of a building in Georgetown at 1220 Wisconsin Avenue raises a question that has been of some concern to the Commission on a number of occasions. The Old Georgetown Act specifically excludes referral by the District Government to the Commission of Fine Arts for an assessment of a building's historical worth when it has been condemned for unsafe or unsanitary conditions. This has led to the demolition of several important buildings and is a major loop-hole in the present Act. I am not proposing that we make any amendments to the existing law at this time. What I am requesting is that the Commission be notified in the event condemnation proceedings are undertaken in Georgetown. This would at least give us the opportunity to make a record of the building before it is torn down and would also afford a chance to alert citizens groups who are interested in preserving some of the old buildings. I know that technically speaking the public is already put on notice by the posting of properties that have been condemned, but these notices are often removed or otherwise obscured. And in any event, even if a building is posted, we have no way of checking on every building in Georgetown on a continuing basis. Proper notification would correct this situation. What do you think?

With all best,

Yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Gilbert Hahn
Chairman of the City Council
Government of the District of Columbia
14th and E Streets, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20004

Exhibit K.

CA:sjt

